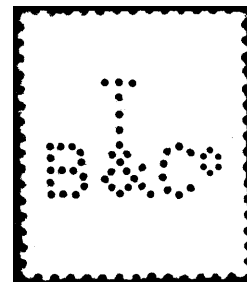


A THIEF AT THOMSON, BONAR & CO?

Maurice Harp

At the AGM meeting last November **John Marinner** showed the attendees an unused block of 18 1d line engraved Plate 118 – a corner piece AA/CF with perfin die T/B&Co - T0470.01. Die T0470.01 was used by Thomson (J), Bonar (T) & Co, merchants at 57½ Old Broad Street, London EC and is known used between 1870 and 1885. As all perfin collectors know when they see unused perfins, this piece may well have been stolen from the company. Seeing John's block reminded me that a similar large piece had been put up for sale in our own auction in 1995 (Auction 8, Lot 260). This piece was an unused block of 36, also from plate 118 with the corner letters DA/IF. I have a photocopy of this piece and looking at the layout of these two blocks it appears that the two blocks came from the same sheet.

Then at STAMPEX this year I was offered the small, unused block shown below from plate 146 corner letters AA/BC – also T0470.01. And then lastly in Bulletin 173 (Feb 1978) a mint block of 43 from Plate 143 was reported.



So over a hundred mint copies of this die have been reported from three different dies. This clearly raises the question as to whether there was a thief at Thomson, Bonar or did this material come to market when the company was liquidated? If any other members have similar material I would be delighted to hear from them. Presumably as whole sheets seem to have been disappearing other blocks must be in existence.